

## **ANNOUNCEMENT FOR FY05 OSWER INNOVATION PILOTS**

### **OVERVIEW INFORMATION**

***Federal Agency:*** The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response (OSWER)

***Funding Opportunity Title:*** The Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response Innovation Pilots.

***Announcement Type:*** New Solicitation for Fiscal Year 2005

***Funding Opportunity Number:*** OSWER IO-05-01

### ***Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number(s):***

If applying for a grant or cooperative agreement, the following Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance numbers may apply:

- 66.804 - State and Tribal Underground Storage Tanks
- 66.808 - Solid Waste Management Assistance
- 66.813 - Alternative or Innovative Treatment Technology Research, Demonstration Training, and Hazardous Substance Research Grants
- 66.810 - CEPP Technical Assistance Grants Program
- 66.611 - Environmental Policy and Innovation Grants

***Dates:*** The IWG plans to have one review round in Fiscal Year 2005. Proposals are due January 14, 2005.

The Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response (OSWER) set aside a limited amount of funding for regional and HQ program offices to develop new and creative approaches addressing OSWER's key priorities. Often times, however, good ideas are developed or enhanced through collaboration and partnership with co-regulators and external stakeholders. To encourage this collaboration, while ensuring a fair and open process to solicit projects from eligible entities, a competition has been established to determine which, if any, proposals, the EPA regions or HQ offices will partner on.

EPA anticipates at least \$500,000 will be available to fund creative proposals testing innovative approaches to waste minimization, energy recovery, recycling, restoring contaminated sites, and homeland security related to chemical emergency, preparedness, and response that may be replicated across various sectors, industries, communities, and regions. We anticipate selecting between 12 - 20 proposals. Proposals can be submitted by EPA employees in OSWER headquarters or regional offices; public authorities (Federal, State, interstate, intrastate, and local); public agencies and institutions; nonprofit private organizations, agencies, and institutions; academia; and federally recognized Tribes. All funds allocated under this program can be placed into Interagency Agreements (IAGs), contracts, cooperative agreements, or grants, depending upon the principal purpose of the transaction. A template is available to aid

applicants in the development of proposals ([IWG template](#)).

The pilots do more than promote innovative efforts within OSWER; they complement EPA's core values and goals. The pilots support goal 3 of EPA's strategic plan, Land Preservation and Restoration, by focusing on better waste management, restoring contaminated sites, and enhancing emergency response.

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#### **I. Funding Opportunity Description**

To encourage innovative thinking and “can do” approaches about environmental challenges throughout the Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response (OSWER) programs, OSWER established the Innovations Workgroup (IWG) and an Innovation Pilot Initiative. The IWG’s primary goals are to pilot and test new ideas that support goal 3 of EPA’s strategic plan, Land Preservation and Restoration. Often, good ideas are developed or enhanced through collaboration and partnership with co-regulators and external stakeholders. To encourage this collaboration, while ensuring a fair and open process to solicit projects from eligible entities, a competition has been established to determine which, if any, proposals, the EPA regions or HQ offices will partner on.

The IWG anticipates providing at least \$500,000 to fund creative proposals testing innovative approaches to one or more of the following priority areas:

- assessing, cleaning up, and restoring contaminated sites to sustainable and beneficial use;
- reducing waste, increasing recycling, recovering energy or products from waste, fostering “green” consumer and business decisions, and properly managing waste and petroleum products;
- enhancing homeland security related to chemical emergency prevention preparedness and response.

The pilots support EPA's overall goals and objectives through projects focusing on better waste management, preventing pollution, restoring contaminated sites, chemical preparedness and emergency response. Forty-four innovation pilots have been selected through FY04. Examples of projects include: making plastics from plant materials; working with the private sector to solicit designs for reusable packaging for books and CDs purchased through the internet; exploring an innovative approach to processing food waste and its potential renewable energy applications; and testing a market-based approach for reducing chemical use and waste at universities.

Proposals may be submitted by EPA employees in OSWER headquarters or regional offices; public authorities (Federal, State, interstate, intrastate, and local); public agencies and institutions; nonprofit private organizations, agencies, and institutions; academia; and federally recognized Tribes. Up to \$75,000 can be requested per pilot, however, we strongly encourage applicants to be as realistic as possible due to minimal overall funding available. All funds allocated under this program can be placed into Interagency Agreements (IAGs), contracts, cooperative agreements, or grants, depending upon the principal purpose of the transaction. A template is available to aid applicants in the development of proposals ([IWG template](#)).

## **II. Award Information**

Final funding for FY05 has not been determined yet, however, the OSWER Innovations Workgroup (IWG) expects to have at least \$500,000 available in FY05 for funding pilot projects. The number of projects selected varies each year depending upon the funds requested for each

selected pilot. In FY02, FY03, and FY04 we funded 12, 19, and 13 pilots, respectively. In FY05 we expect to award between 12 to 20 pilots. Up to \$75,000 may be requested per pilot, however, we strongly encourage applicants to be as realistic as possible in your request. We have a preference to fund as many projects as possible. The average funding per pilot in the past has been \$47,000. The anticipated period of performance for the pilots is one to two years.

All funds allocated under this program can be placed into Interagency Agreements (IAGs), contracts, cooperative agreements, or grants, depending upon the principal purpose of the transaction. Contracts must be used to obtain services for EPA's direct use or benefit, and may be used to provide in-kind assistance to eligible non-Federal organizations. EPA cannot direct contractors or assistance recipients to hire particular individuals or contract with particular firms. Grants and cooperative agreements may be used to provide financial support to non-Federal organizations to help them carry out their own projects addressing the three priority areas. Cooperative agreements are appropriate when EPA will be substantially involved in assisting the recipient carry out its project. The decision whether to award a grant or cooperative agreement will be made on a case- by- case basis depending upon the anticipated substantial involvement by EPA.

### **III. Eligibility Information**

#### **Who is Eligible to Submit a Proposal?**

***If requesting funds*** - Proposals for funding under this program generally can be submitted by EPA employees in OSWER headquarters or regional offices; public authorities (Federal, State, interstate, intrastate, and local); public agencies and institutions; nonprofit private organizations, agencies, and institutions; academia; and federally recognized Tribes. Some of EPA's statutes may limit assistance to specific types of interested applicants. Projects must be wholly conducted within the borders of the United States and its territories. IWG pilot **funds** are not available for "for profit" companies, organizations or private individuals. (If you are applying for a grant or cooperative agreement, a description of how you are an eligible entity is required with your proposal. The proposal template used to submit your proposal includes a section for this description.)

***If not requesting funds*** - In addition to the organizations and institutions identified in the preceding paragraphs, private businesses and individuals, even though they are not eligible for funding, may submit proposals without a request for funds or work with eligible entities on funded projects once funding is awarded. In some cases, organizations may be interested in utilizing EPA technical expertise, project evaluation support, outreach assistance, or other resources.

#### **Are there Cost Sharing or Matching Requirements?**

The IWG anticipates the only cost share requirement for its pilots will be for projects awarded under CERCLA 311 (b)(3) for alternative or innovative treatment technology research and demonstration. CERCLA 311(b)(3) requires EPA "to the maximum extent possible" enter into an appropriate cost-sharing arrangement with recipients of grants and cooperative agreements.

EPA may waive the 311(b)(3) cost-sharing requirement in appropriate cases. In-kind contributions can count toward meeting the cost share requirement. Applicants submitting proposals for innovative and alternative treatment technology must either propose a match of at least 5% or request a waiver.

### **What are the Threshold Criteria?**

To be eligible for funding, applicants must meet both of the following two threshold criteria. Threshold criteria are evaluated on a pass/fail basis. If a response to a threshold criterion fails, the proposal will be disqualified from further consideration. EPA, however, may seek clarification from an applicant regarding its response to the threshold criteria.

1. Project addresses a critical challenge or unmet need related to one or more of the following priority areas:

- assessing, cleaning up, and restoring contaminated sites to sustainable and beneficial use;
- reducing waste, increasing recycling, recovering energy or products from waste, fostering “green” consumer and business decisions, and properly managing waste and petroleum products;
- enhancing homeland security related to chemical emergency prevention preparedness and response.

*A proposal may cover more than one priority area. The applicant must identify the priority area(s) the project is addressing.*

2. If you are applying to partner with EPA as a grant or cooperative agreement recipient and requesting funding, you must be an eligible entity to receive a grant or cooperative agreement.

*If you are applying for a grant or cooperative agreement you must include with your proposal a description of how you are an eligible entity. Refer to the description of eligibility in this section.*

### **Other Eligibility Criteria**

In addition to the two Threshold Criteria identified in the preceding paragraph, an applicant is required to meet all the requirements of this announcement. We have attempted to summarize or provide a cross reference for all the requirements here, however, you should review the entire announcement carefully and contact an IWG member if you have any questions regarding eligibility.

The applicant must meet all format and content requirements contained in this announcement. The applicant must comply with the directions for submittal. Failure to meet these requirements may result in your application being returned without review or scored low for incompleteness (see Section IV). Additionally, Section IV identifies any funding restrictions based on statutory or policy requirements.

An applicant can submit more than one proposal.

If awarded, projects must ensure that no population is subjected to unjust or disproportionate environmental impacts - risk should not be shifted from one population to another.

## **IV Application and Submission Information**

### **Where do I obtain the Proposal Template needed to apply?**

A copy of the [IWG template](#) is found on this web site. Also, you can request a hard copy of the template from any of the IWG members. (See List of [IWG members](#))

### **What are the Content and Format Requirements for My Proposal?**

Proposals are required to contain the following information:

- 1) Pilot Contact Information;
- 2) Summary Statement;
- 3) Problem Statement and Project Overview;
- 4) Schedule with Milestones;
- 5) Responses to the Threshold and Evaluation Criteria (including the Budget); and
- 6) Letters of Support, if applicants have partners as part of the pilot team.

The IWG developed a template to aid in the preparation of all pilot proposals. The sections found in italics are meant to be filled in.

There is a **six page** limit for each completed proposal, including the budget and milestones. [The page limit does not apply to letters of support that are required for documenting partner resources and funds (see below).] **Pages in excess of this limit will be removed and not evaluated.** We will not accept attachments, maps, or photos.

Proposals should be submitted **electronically** in WordPerfect or Word, 12 point font with one inch margins on 8-½" x 11" paper format to an IWG member. In the event of a computer system failure, please contact your IWG member. The IWG member will accept a hard copy postmarked or faxed by the due date or hand delivered proposals only in the rare event of a system failure, and only after the IWG member receives notification prior to the submittal due date of system problems. If you do not have access to electronic mail, please contact the IWG member. In the event of a pagination problem arising from an electronic submission, an IWG member may request a hard copy of the proposal to document conformance to the formatting requirements.

**Documentation of Partner Participation (does not count against page limit)** If the applicant is including cooperative partners as part of the pilot team, a letter of support from each cooperative partner is required. The letter must be on the partner's letterhead and must be signed by a responsible official of the partner organization stating their intention to work on and/or contribute funds to the project including an estimate of the funding and time commitment. Letters of support must be provided to document any matching or supplemental funds that are described in the proposal. These letters may be submitted separately from the proposal but must be submitted by the proposal due date.

Please note, in some cases pilots will not have cooperative partners. In those cases, letters of support from partners are not required.

### **How do I Submit My Proposal?**

With the exception of homeland security proposals, proposals should be submitted to an IWG member. Proposals addressing homeland security related to chemical emergency prevention preparedness and response should be electronically submitted directly to the HQ IWG Homeland Security contact, Kim Jennings, and not the regional or other HQ contacts. See IWG members for contact information, including their e-mail addresses.

Proposals must be submitted to only one IWG member.

### **When are Proposals Due?**

The IWG anticipates having one review round in Fiscal Year 2005. Proposals are due January 14, 2005. All proposals must be received electronically by 5:00 p.m. local time on the due date. Late proposals will not be reviewed. The IWG will use the computer generated time and date for documenting receipt time and date. We expect final decisions to be made within three months of the proposal due date.

### **Intergovernmental Review**

If you receive funds via a Cooperative Agreement or Grant, Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs applies.

### **Funding Restrictions**

All projects must be directly related to solid waste, hazardous substances in the environment, or chemical emergency preparedness, prevention, and response, and at least one of the three OSWER priority areas identified on page three. EPA funds may only be used for the purposes set forth in the award, and must be consistent with the statutory authority for the award. OSWER anticipates using the Solid Waste Disposal Act, section 8001, as amended; the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976, as amended; the Comprehensive Environmental Response and Liability Act, Sections 104 and 311; the Clean Air Act, Sections 112 and 103; the Clean Water Act, Section 104 as amended; and the Toxic Substances Control Act, Sections 10 and 28 for funding grants or cooperative agreements. Once proposals are reviewed and final recommendations are prepared, the IWG confirms the authority to be used to fund the projects and may make modifications to the project to fall within the purview of the authority of the statute.

Most of the statutes authorize awards for the following activities: research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys, education materials and programs, and studies. The statutory term “demonstration” can encompass the first instance of the application or an innovative application of a previously used method. The term “research” may include the application of established practices when they contribute to learning about an environmental concept or problem. Funding awarded for research under CERCLA 311(c) does not include research within the purview of EPA’s Office of Research and Development.

Grant funds may not be used for matching funds for other Federal grants or lobbying.

All costs identified in the budget must conform to applicable Federal Cost Principles contained in OMB circular A-87, A-122, and A-21. Ineligible costs will be reduced from final grant award.

***funding restrictions - brownfields:*** Under this solicitation, OSWER will not consider proposals that have a principal purpose of providing training, research, and technical assistance to individuals and organizations to facilitate the inventory of brownfields sites, site assessment or remediation of only brownfields sites, and community involvement or site preparation primarily for brownfields sites. EPA funds these types of projects under the Office of Brownfields Cleanup and Redevelopment's Brownfields Training, Research, and Technical Assistance Grant and Cooperative Agreement Program. The IWG can fund proposals addressing environmental protection through land revitalization utilizing CERCLA 311 (b) and (c) and RCRA 8001 authorities. Acceptable proposals may include assessment, evaluation, research, community involvement, and training on the effects of and risks to human health and the environment from hazardous substances or solid waste generally, rather than contamination at specific brownfields sites or exclusively at brownfields sites. Proposals that include any brownfields related activities must include an explanation of why the activities meet this requirement.

***funding restrictions - construction:*** Assistance shall not include any element of construction.

***funding restrictions - contracting:*** Applicants should be aware that recipients of EPA financial assistance whose grant proposals contemplate contracting for services or products must comply with applicable regulations relating to competitive procurement and preparing cost or price analyses (see 40 CFR 30.40 through 30.48). The fact that an applicant identifies a particular contractor or supplier in its proposal does not exempt the applicant from these requirements.

***funding restrictions - equipment:*** Equipment purchases must be both integral and critical to the proposed innovation project. EPA funds must not be used to purchase equipment that is only peripherally related to the project. The proposal should clearly indicate the importance and need for any proposed equipment purchases.

## **V. Application Review Information**

### **What are the proposal evaluation criteria?**

The IWG will use the following criteria to evaluate the proposals:

Criterion 1 - Addresses a critical challenge or unmet need related to one or more of the three priority areas

Criterion 2 - Is an eligible entity, if applying for a cooperative agreement or grant

Criterion 3 - Fosters either innovative approaches toward environmental challenges or a more innovative culture or organizational system within the targeted organization.

Criterion 4 - Provides a process to measure and evaluate the impact of the pilot and desired



outcome

Criterion 5 - Builds and strengthens partnerships with state, tribal and local governments or interested public federal programs/initiatives; and/or other external stakeholders.

Criterion 6 - Has potential for pilot results to be applied across geographic regions or programs

Criterion 7 - Can be realistically implemented and is likely to produce preliminary short term environmental results within six months and longer term results and or/measurable progress within one year of initiation of the project

Criterion 8 - Appropriately uses limited EPA funding

The first two criteria are considered “Threshold Criteria” and were discussed in Section III.

Proposals that pass the Threshold Criteria will be evaluated based upon responses to criteria three through eight. These are evaluation criteria and will be evaluated on a point system. The evaluation criteria and associated points are as follows:

**Criterion 3 - Fosters either innovative approaches toward environmental challenges or a more innovative culture or organizational system within the targeted organization. (20 points)** *All applicants must identify why this proposal is truly innovative or encourages an innovative culture. Applicants are strongly encouraged to review previously-funded proposals to ensure a pilot is truly innovative. Previously funded pilots can be found at the IWG website: [http://www.epa.gov/oswer/iwg/innovation\\_pilots.htm/](http://www.epa.gov/oswer/iwg/innovation_pilots.htm/) Pilots that are similar in concept, scope, sector, and/or impact to previously funded pilots may receive fewer points for innovation. For the purposes of the IWG evaluation, we are considering proposals innovative if they fall within one of the following categories.*

*1) is a new idea*

*2) expands an existing idea to another sector or geographic region*

*3) promotes an innovative idea or “sells” the results*

**Criterion 4 - Provides a process to measure and evaluate the impact of the pilot and desired outcome. (10 points)** *Applicants must describe how evaluation and measurement of success will be accomplished. Describe any baseline measures of success you have developed or plan to develop. List the measurements you will use to determine whether the project is a success. The measures of success need to be specific and linked to the process and overall objectives for your pilot. Proposals should be able to demonstrate how performance related measures will be used in measuring and evaluating environmental and human health protection and outcome, if appropriate.*

**Criterion 5 - Builds or strengthens partnerships with state, tribal and local governments; other federal programs/initiatives; and/or other external stakeholders. (10 points)** *Applicants must identify how this project will build and strengthen partnerships with states, tribes, local government, or other stakeholders. The applicant must describe any activities conducted or planned to be conducted in order to build or strengthen stakeholder involvement and describe the role and responsibilities of your cooperative partners, if any. If you have cooperative partners as part of the pilot team, a letter of support from those entities is required.*

**Criterion 6 - Has potential for pilot results to be applied across geographic regions or programs. (10 points)** *We are looking for projects whose findings/results can be incorporated into EPA programs or expanded to other areas. Describe the potential transferability of the innovation, including potential steps, once the project is completed, to transfer performance results.*

**Criterion 7 - Can be realistically implemented and is likely to produce preliminary short term results within six months and longer term results and or/measurable progress within one year of initiation of the project. (10 points)** *The proposal should have a clearly articulated cohesive strategy for how the project would be implemented and results achieved. We will be accepting proposals whose project period is longer than six months but we are looking for projects that will show some results in the short term (six months). The pilot should be ready to start once funds are received.*

**Criterion 8 - Appropriately uses limited EPA funding (10 points)** *Provide the proposed budget for your pilot and explain how it is cost effective. We are looking for projects that effectively and efficiently use limited EPA funding to conduct the pilot or aspects of the pilot, and if possible leverage other available resources. Describe the financial needs for each major task and subtask, identify the funds/support that will be committed by your agency/organization, if any, and describe all other funding sources that are committed to fill in any remaining funding gaps. Please identify the funding vehicle to be used (cooperative agreement, contract, IAG, grant). Ensure that any proposed purchases of equipment are both integral and critical to the proposal.*

#### **How are proposals reviewed and selected?**

Proposals must be submitted directly to an [IWG member](#) by the scheduled due date. The IWG members review and evaluate the proposals against the threshold and evaluation criteria noted in this Section and in Section III. Based on these criteria, IWG members determine which proposals they will forward to the full IWG for review. Reviewers will evaluate responses to the threshold criteria on a pass/fail basis and will evaluate responses to evaluation criteria using a point system. If a proposal fails one threshold criterion it will not receive any further consideration. Each region and program office may only forward a pre-determined number of qualifying proposals to the full IWG. The number may vary each round. By forwarding a proposal, the region and program office is committing to developing the pilot if it is selected; therefore, at this point an EPA sponsor is assigned by the region or program office if the proposal was not submitted by an EPA employee. The EPA sponsor is responsible for all aspects of the pilot, including the allocation of pilot funds and may act as the project officer.

The full IWG will meet in national panels to review and evaluate the forwarded proposals against the established criteria identified in the template. Final funding decisions will be made by OSWER senior management based upon the IWG's recommendations. EPA decisions may take into account other statutory and policy considerations, such as geographic distribution; whether the applicant is a federally recognized Tribe; distribution among the priority areas and program/regional offices; availability of funds; and consideration of environmental justice

issues.

### **When will funding decisions be made?**

We expect final decisions to be made within three months of the proposal due date. The Agency, however, reserves the right to reject all proposals.

## **VI. Award Administration Information**

### **Award Notices**

Final funding selection will be made by OSWER Assistant Administrator or his/her designee based upon the recommendations of the IWG. Successful applicants will receive a letter via electronic mail or fax stating that their proposal has been selected and will be asked to submit a cooperative agreement/grant or other funding package to the appropriate EPA regional or OSWER HQ program office. Applicants receiving a cooperative agreement or grant will be required to submit a formal request for funding assistance (i.e., federal form SF 424 and associated documentation). Once the package is approved, a notice of award signed by the approving official will be sent to the applicant through postal mail. The award letter is the authorization to begin performance. EPA will work closely with the applicant to process and finalize the package. Unsuccessful applicants will also receive a letter via electronic mail or fax informing them of the selection results.

We expect to make final selection within three months of the proposal due dates. We expect to have all awards made by September 30, 2005.

### **Administrative and National Policy Requirements**

Cooperative Agreements or Grants approved will include terms and conditions. These terms and conditions will be binding on the recipient and cover such areas as complying with all applicable federal regulations and reporting requirements. (See the following Reporting section.)

### **Reporting**

If selected, there are three required elements that must be completed regardless of whether funds are received: quarterly report with performance measures and budget; a final report; and a lessons-learned/scale-up report. (EPA staff are available as an advisory resource, as needed, to help with performance measures development and other evaluative planning.) The quarterly reports do not have to be lengthy but must include the following information: current status of the project; results achieved thus far, including the evaluation measures; budget expenditures and current status of funds; and issues impeding further progress. We will work with the selected pilots to develop performance measures. Performance measures will be reviewed and incorporated into the quarterly reports. Electronic submission of quarterly reports is preferred and strongly recommended but not required.

## **VII. Agency Contacts**

Information on the initiative including information on pilots previously selected and [Frequently Asked Questions](#) can be found on the IWG web site. Additionally, you can contact an IWG member. See [IWG member list](#) for the names, phone and fax numbers, and e-mail addresses of

the IWG members.

Pre-application assistance: IWG members can help you understand the eligibility requirements. **Such assistance is available to all applicants upon request.** [Frequently Asked Questions](#) will be posted on this web site.

#### **VIII. Other Information**

Proposals are subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). This means that anyone can request, and receive copies of them. Applicants should clearly mark information they consider confidential. EPA will make final confidentiality decisions in accordance with Agency regulations in 40 CFR Part 2, Subpart B.

EPA reserves the right to reject any or all proposals or applications and make no awards.

The dispute resolution process will be followed in accordance with 40 CFR 30.63 and Part 31, Subpart F.